

**TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
OCTOBER 4, 2005 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2**

Members Present: C. Nado, E. Cole, R. Seager, K. Vaughn (7:30 p.m.) and R. Keyes
Alternates Present: R. Boardman
Alternates Absent: D. Madden
Staff: K. Quinn, S. Discordia

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Cole read the Call of the Hearing as it appearing in The Day.

Chairman Nado appointed Boardman as a voting member.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

HDC 05-56 – 9 Rathbun Place; David Polansky, owner; Phil Trowbridge, applicant; construction of decks. PIN #261805294881

Mr. Trowbridge presented drawings, plans and pictures to the Commission. He is proposing decks for the rear of the house. The plans show existing as well as proposed. The decks will be all wood and no vinyl. The Commission thought that it would look appropriate to the historic district.

Chairman Nado asked for public comments and there were none.

The following exhibits were presented:

- 3 pictures
- 4 drawings

HDC 05-57 – 27 West Mystic Avenue; Carol A. Silva owner/applicant; replace front door. PIN # 261805284700

Ms. Silva submitted a picture and spec sheet of the front door she would like to install. She submitted pictures of the old door and new door. It would be a painted fiberglass door. The Commission did not have a problem with the proposed door.

Chairman Nado asked for public comments and there were none.

The following exhibits were presented:

- 4 pictures

Chairman Nado closed the public hearings at 7:10 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 05-56 – 9 Rathbun Place

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Seager, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

HDC 05-57 – 27 West Mystic Avenue

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Cole, seconded by Keyes, so voted unanimously.

PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Andrea Logman of 17 New London Road handed out pictures of different views of the back of her home to the Commission. She would like to replace the back deck with a wooden deck. Ms. Longmen stated they were going to enclose a portion of a mudroom and make the deck a little larger, about 2 feet in each direction. She would like to put a window on one side of the mudroom. The mudroom will extend past the frame of the rest of the house by about 2 feet.

The Commission requested that a few more pictures be taken at different angles and a shot of the whole house. Staff stated that the back deck would need railings that are 36 inches high per state building codes. The Commission informed the applicant that she would need much more detailed drawings drawn to scale for a public hearing. Chairman Nado stated that she would need to bring in brochures showing the new window and door.

Seager stated that there are not many stick and shingle houses left in Mystic. He was concerned about the addition because the mudroom would interrupt the side of the house and protrude by 2 feet. Seager stated he didn't have a problem with replacing the inappropriate brick deck with a wood one.

The Commission was concerned about the addition protruding from the side of the house. They encouraged Ms. Longmen to get more detailed drawings of the improvements she would like to make. The Commission suggested she come back for another preliminary before a public hearing is set.

Dawn Courier, Mermaid's Cove Jewelers of 12 Water Street at Factory Square. Ms. Courier will be moving the business to 5 West Main Street. Ms. Courier is asking for permission to relocate her sign. Chairman Nado was concerned with removing brackets from one building and putting new holes in the other building. Seager stated that any holes left open by removing signs should be mortared back up. The Commission asked for a picture of the new building where they would like to move the sign.

Peter Springsteel, an architect, represented the owners of 27 Gravel Street. He submitted pictures and showed drawings of the proposed trim of this house. They would like to remove the shutters.

They want to add a dental molding under the soffett. Mr. Springsteel stated they would like to put in a window in the top dormer. The Commission discussed the width of the pilasters. The Commission agreed that this house did not need a lot of detail and trim, as the structure with the stone foundation is a very handsome structure. Vaughn stated that she liked all the detail and trim and thought it would be an improvement on this home as it is 3 stories high.

Brian Navaro, owner of 18-22 West Main Street, showed some new drawings of the proposed building to the Commission. Mr. Navaro stated they explored use of color. He stated they would like to keep the body of the building a cream color. Mr. Navaro briefed commissioner Vaughn as she had missed several preliminary meetings regarding 18-22 West Main Street. The Commission stated that they do not rule on color.

Seager stated he had been waiting for a three-dimensional image done to scale as it appropriately shows the scale of the proposed building to others in downtown Mystic.

Chairman Nado noticed a change in the windows of the drawing and Mr. Desmaris stated that the actual level of the road jumps 2 feet and it is not reflected in the drawings. Mr. Navaro stated they didn't have the back of the building in a 3-dimensional scale as of yet. They brought in a 3-dimensional model of downtown West Main Street to show the Commission. Keyes asked if the proposed building sets back further than the previous building and Mr. Desmaris stated it does. Chairman Nado stated that the mass of this building is still too big. Seager stated that as he looks at their model, he realizes that the dormers are a huge mistake as there isn't another building in town with a roofline that is similar.

Chairman Nado reviewed what Bill Bertsche had sent the Commission. Mr. Navaro disputed the fact of the Commission taking in any other information from the public and asked if the Commission was seeking expert advice from Bill Bertsche. Seager stated that the Commission has the right to seek outside professional help, but Bill Bertsche had volunteered this information as a member of the public. Seager stated that anything that the public would like to submit would be accepted and put on file. Seager stated that Mr. Desmaris and Mr. Navaro had petitions signed by local residents submitted and they are on file as well.

Discussion ensued about Bill Bertsche's motives for submitting this information to the Commission. Seager stated that this building is out of place and he realized this once he saw the 3-dimensional drawings from Bill Bertsche. Seager stated that he had asked Mr. Navaro and Mr. Desmaris several times to submit 3-dimensional drawings and/or a model.

Chairman Nado stated that he was concerned with the height of the building. Chairman Nado stated that compared to the application that was already approved, its not only 4 feet higher but the footprint is also larger. He stated it should not go back any further than the three buildings on either side of it. Chairman Nado stated that this building is totally out of place. Chairman Nado stated that he would prefer a two-story building.

Vaughn stated that she thought that the mass could possibly work, but the model hurts them more than it helps them. Vaughn stated that the environment this building would be in is very

simplicistic. Vaughn stated that this building should have clear simple lines as would be appropriate to the historic district.

Mr. Navaro stated that it sounds like this Commission would not under any circumstances approve a four-story building. Chairman Nado stated that he should get an opinion from each Commission member.

Seager stated that they didn't want this to come off like a residence. The moment this building became complex and lost it's simplicity it stands out from the rest of the buildings. Seager stated he can't get past the dormers and how it doesn't go with anything else in downtown. Seager stated it is very destructive to downtown especially viewing it from the river.

Vaughn stated that she thought 4 stories could fit in this district if designed without the dormers and appropriate to the buildings on either side of it. This proposed building was going to be the dominant building from the views on Gravel Street and the river. Vaughn stated that this proposed building is not consistent with the scale of any other building in this area.

Mr. Desmaris and Mr. Navaro stated again that they needed every square foot of this building to fiscally make it work. They could not build this structure without a fourth floor.

Boardman stated that mass and the dormers are an issue. He thought a four-story could fit there if reconfigured appropriately. Boardman stated that he would not approve of this building with so many porches on the back.

Keyes would rather see a simpler design of the proposed building. She stated that she hasn't approved of any buildings with so many decks visible from so many points in the historic district. Keyes approved of the little stores on the lower level. She stated that people should be able to walk behind the proposed building and view the river without walking under the overhang and feeling like they're in a tunnel.

Cole stated she did not approve of the dormers and did not think they are appropriate. She doesn't like the way the overhang comes out back. She likes both the brick and the clapboard. Cole would rather see the depth cut back.

Seager stated the dormers have to go and simplification of the geometry of the building is important. He believed that one facade across the back would be advantageous. He would not vote for the building if it remained that deep. Seager stated that the porches would have to be redesigned and inset and then he might approve of them. He felt that the decks signified to all points of view that these were condominiums.

CORRESPONDENCE - None

MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes of September 20, 2005

Motion made by Keyes, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS - None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:21 p.m. made by Seager, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Cole, Secretary